

Dawley Urban District Council

INTERIM REPORT

on the
**HEALTH AND SANITARY
CIRCUMSTANCES of the
DAWLEY URBAN AREA**
:: for the year 1946 ::

Public Health Committee:—

Chairman : Mrs. A. BIRD

**Mrs. K. TUTT : Mr. I. BAUGH : Dr. S. N. BROWNE
Mr. F. BIRD : Mr. G. CHETWOOD**

Public Health Officers:—

**Dr. W. A. M. STEWART, M.B., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.
Barrister-at-Law : Medical Officer of Health**

**GEORGE P. TANNER, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.
Sanitary Inspector & Cleansing Superintendent**

Dawley Urban District Council

Again the Ministry of Health has found it expedient to retain the form of Annual Report as submitted from the beginning of the War and this being so an interim survey of the health and sanitary circumstances of your area is given herein.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

1947 was a year of freedom from epidemic conditions but, nevertheless, a considerable variety of disease has been brought to notice. It may be said that this reflects a true picture of the state of the district—not always to be found elsewhere—as, locally, disease is notified well. Scarlet Fever showed a fall to half the total for 1945. Whooping Cough was present in considerable numbers, but there was an almost complete absence of Measles. Pneumonia showed a higher figure than usual. No other disease requires notice and it will be seen that no case of Diphtheria occurred.

Vital statistics show that the Birth Rate was above that of England and Wales, while the Death Rate among Infants was also a little higher. The same state prevailed in relationship to the General Death Rate.

The Tuberculosis Register has returned a total practically stationary with that of recent years and from this disease a Death Rate higher than that of the country resulted.

The Council has, in common with others, directed much time to the relief of housing distress and this here presents a monumental task if it is to be met satisfactorily. In the Public Health Department refuse and allied services have called for much attention and this is noted in the section on scavenging.

The Medical Officer of Health has discussed with the Committee on Public Health the deficiencies of administration of the Department and again attention is directed to the need for closer general liaison and continuity in recording—this latter has presented a great problem to your new Sanitary Inspector.

Thanks are due to your Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor for their help in the compilation of the report.

Section A

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area

Area (in acres)	3,000
Registrar General's estimate of resident population ...	8,120
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1946) according to rate-books	2,305

Rateable value	...	...	£18,690
Sum represented by one penny rate	...	...	£73 2s. 0.74d.
Persons per acre (calculated on population)	...	...	2.7

POPULATION AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The return of the Registrar General shows that there has been a rise in population. To meet the general needs and provide for such increase the authority plans not only adequate housing but also improvement in the social amenities. On this the Surveyor reports as follows:—

A draft development plan under the N.E. Salop Joint Planning Committee has been approved by the Council together with a plan for the central redevelopment of the Town. This latter plan includes reservations for Civic Centre, Bus Station, Road Widening, Shopping Centre and other amenities.

The Manor Farm Estate is to be laid out as a Housing Scheme, part being reserved for School Extensions.

The Tennis Courts in the Recreation Ground are being reopened in 1947 and it is hoped to develop a general Sports Field on the land being reclaimed by tipping. At present only football is played on this ground.

Extracts from Vital Statistics

LIVE BIRTHS.	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	74	83	157
Illegitimate	11	13	24
Totals ...	85	96	181

Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated population	...	...	22.2
Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated population (England and Wales)	...	...	19.1

STILL BIRTHS.	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	3	1	4
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Totals ...	3	1	4

Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births	21.1
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DEATHS.	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total number of deaths	56	51	107
Death Rate per 1,000 of estimated population	13.1
Death Rate per 1,000 of estimated population (England and Wales)	11.5

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

All Infants, per 1,000 live births	49.7
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All Infants, per 1,000 live births (England and Wales) ...	43
Legitimate Infants, per 1,000 live legitimate births ...	57.3
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 live illegitimate births ...	—

TOTAL NUMBER OF INFANT DEATHS.			Male	Female
Legitimate	...	...	5	4
Illegitimate	...	...	—	—
Total	...	...	5	4

DEATHS from:

Cancer (all ages) ...	...	...	...	18
Measles (all ages) ...	...	...	...	—
Whooping Cough (all ages)...	...	...	...	—
Diarrhoea (under 2 years) ...	...	...	...	—

MATERNITY MORTALITY.

Under this heading there were no deaths.

CHIEF CAUSES OF DEATH.

Tuberculosis (all forms) ...	...	...	...	4
Cancer ...	...	...	...	18
Intracranial Vascular Lesions	...	...	...	15
Heart Disease and Circulatory Disturbances	...	...	...	22
Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	14
Nephritis ...	...	...	...	2
Premature Births and Congenital Malformations	...	...	...	4
Violence	...	...	...	10
Diabetes	...	...	...	4
Abdominal Disease	...	...	...	6
Diarrhoea (under 2 years) ...	...	...	...	—

Section B

General Provision for Health Services in District

AMBULANCE.

Following the discussions of 1945 it was found possible to start the amalgamated service in the area during the year. The three Authorities participating—Dawley, Wellington Rural, and Oaken-gates—have met their difficulties in a satisfactory manner, and the result is that now there is an ample and efficient centre providing modern vehicles for the comfort of patients with adequate attendance. The Centre is at Donnington. Three ambulances are on call, the principal of which is that formerly used in this district. There is a whole-time driver and attendant and reliefs to these are at hand. The work of this new venture has compared more than favourably with that of others in the county, and locally the improvement in timing after call has been greatly appreciated. At an early date the County Authority will have to meet the demands

of the new Health Act and take over the absolute control of all ambulances in their area. As a result of this local advance it is anticipated that the Centre at Donnington will serve as a key station in the county scheme.

MORTUARY SERVICE.

The medical practitioners have complained for a long time about the poor facilities offered for the harbouring of the homeless dead and others and the almost insurmountable difficulties in carrying out their duties associated with these. As this service functions at irregular times it is not economic in a small community to establish a centre with modern conveniences. To overcome this, discussions have taken place with neighbours with the view to securing co-operative working. Wellington Rural Council have at their disposal buildings which can be suitably adapted, and it is hoped that early in 1947 the fruits of these preliminary talks will be seen in the establishment of a centre at Donnington. It is also expected that the conversions will be carried through at a very reasonable cost.

Section C

Vermin Control and Disinfestation

Investigation of the sewers has taken place at the request and in conjunction with the County Authority for the presence of rats. A system of pre-baiting has been followed by the laying of poison but the results would seem to indicate that here there is no major infestation. At the refuse tipping centres a few vermin have been reported and the County Officer has dealt with these; this by contract. The Sanitary Inspector reports that generally there have been few complaints from householders of this form of infestation.

A few complaints of bugs in homes have come to hand and such cases have been met by local spraying.

Locally there is no disinfectant. The area has to depend on the use of insecticide preparations to deal with infestations of clothing and furniture and this has been the method practised when bugs have been reported.

SCAVENGING SERVICE.

The aim is fortnightly collection from all premises with an intensification of this to a weekly basis in the town centre. The means of removal is by two motor vehicles and these are manned by three persons to each vehicle. It cannot be said that this service functions at all well. Among other reasons this may be accounted for through the frequent breakdowns of the motors, labour difficulties and the severity of weather conditions over roads which do not, at their best allow any liberties. The writer has drawn your attention to the disproportionately large amount of time you

have given in your deliberations to this subject and there is no doubt that the Authority with its refuse and night-soil problems has to face a position foreign to most other districts. It would seem to budget on the vehicles and labour presently available no solution of this difficulty will be found. The Sanitary Inspector feels that while with a new refuse collector there is hope of some improvement that of night-soil will not advance until such time as a mechanical means of emptying cesspits has been procured. The whole of the latter is bound up with the deficiencies in sewerage and do what one may it will only be bettered when this deficiency has been overcome. Without doubt this is the major problem of the Authority and the reasons for this must not be evaded.

Controlled tipping is not practised at the many tips now in use. An approach in this direction has been made on this system of refuse control at that at the town centre where it is hoped that reclamation and subsequent extension of the playing fields will be the result. The Sanitary Inspector considers that the system of multi-tipping is generally unsatisfactory as there is an impossibility of control with the labour given and the result is uneconomic.

It is the purpose of the Council to require a standard dustbin from each house or premises. If this could be established much labour in collection would be saved. Owing, however, to the difficulty of supply due to metal shortage it has not been found possible to follow this course, but your Officer has been able to obtain some stock and to sell to applicants at a reasonable price.

SALVAGE.

This service, formerly under voluntary control, has recently been collected through your local office. The response to such collection has been poor and disappointing and there is great room for improvement. The results of these collections have shown a tendency to diminish rather than increase.

This may be attributed to a variety of causes such as irregular collections, labour difficulties, severe weather and the fact that householders are not so salvage minded as they were during the war years.

WATER SUPPLIES.

The town is still dependent on the neighbouring Borough of Wenlock for this. This is given in the chlorinated state and the results of sampling have shown satisfactory returns. No change has been made in the number of homes still using standpipe service but when the proposed additional supply from the Shifnal area has been established a fall in this category should result. The Surveyor reports on the year's working as follows:—

The supply of water to the whole area was generally maintained.

The quantity of water delivered by the gravity main from the Borough of Wenlock to the Little Dawley Pumping Station is only just sufficient to meet the consumption.

It is therefore apparent that the utmost economy in the use of water must be exercised until the new supply from Shifnal is in operation.

The conversion of the pumps at the Little Dawley Pumping Station from oil to electric power has been commenced.

SEWERS AND SEWERAGE MAIN WORKS.

No change has been made in the means of disposal practised locally. As has been said in earlier reports this is provided for at two makeshift outfalls. Complaints have been received from time to time and steps have been taken to mitigate the nuisances caused but these have been merely palliative and not in any way curative. The Council with an enquiry already completed has approached the Ministry of Health to expedite the work of constitution of new disposal plants but little progress has been made in the year. It has to be remembered that even with the new plant by no means all the properties in the district will be able to be served. This position is the cause for great anxiety to the Authority and the present state is reflected in the incessant complaints arising from the collection of night-soil.

No extensions of a major character have been planned or undertaken with the exception of those to the new housing estate.

MAINTENANCE.

This is in the hands of the Surveyor and he has had to adapt and adopt and improvise to meet the needs of this inadequate scheme.

NIGHT-SOIL.

Privies, pan-closets and cesspools form a considerable part of the means of sewage disposal. It is a form of disposal which adds greatly to the work of the Sanitary Department. It is a source of continual complaint and the whole is a constant medium for dissatisfaction to all concerned. The number of privies is 629 and that of pan-closets 497.

PUBLIC LAVATORIES.

There is one provided for each sex and these are in good order and well maintained.

Section D

Housing

GENERAL.

This Authority is in the unsatisfactory position that it has many more unfit houses than is usual in an area of a similar nature. This may be accounted for by the lack of maintenance measures

taken in the years past and to the bad siting. There is moreover the failure of past authorities to keep abreast of the times by re-building and reconditioning. In the opinion of the Sanitary Inspector private enterprise or the lack of it may also be blamed as it seems that this type of building has not progressed in the area as it should.

To meet these deficiencies and lack of adequate housing accommodation the Council has in hand some 40 houses under construction at Malinslee but none of these had been completed at the end of the year. In addition plans had been prepared for some 70 at Little Eyton. When these in progress have been finished there will be an addition of some one hundred homes but without any difficulty against this a list of at least 600 houses unfit for survival could be brought forward. To meet the record of applicants already numbering over 500 persons a scheme is in use and this is such as to provide an impartial means of selection. The Authority has shown considerable regard for Service applicants and are prepared to allocate for these some 50 per cent of new properties.

TEMPORARY HOUSES.

Up to the end of the year no active measures had been taken in consideration of this type of dwelling.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

Up to the end of the year plans had been passed for 23 and of these nil had been completed.

HUTMENTS.

It has been noticed that there is a limited number of this type of dweller in the district. A few complaints have been received and in many instances such complaints have been made as a means of securing recognition for more permanent dwellings.

OVERCROWDING.

The Sanitary Inspector reports that he has no record of this, but in his opinion there are many cases, some of which have come to light through the channels of the housing application forms. When the present large volumn of house applicants have been served or are likely to have their needs met it would seem that then would be the time to weed out any outstanding overcrowding as to do so now would be futile and purposeless.

CARAVANS.

Cases have been reported of this type of dweller and the attention of the Department has been directed to a particular case at Botany Bay. Here was an enlarged type of dwelling with a dissatisfied resident who did not belong to the district. Eventually this family was rehoused elsewhere.

CONDEMNATION.

No houses have been officially condemned, but this is so rather through the means of local procedure than the lack of need for such action.

REPAIRS.

Only those essential to maintain property weatherproof have been completed. No general maintenance has been attempted and much is outstanding. This is in the main due to lack of material and labour shortage and with these shortages would appear not likely to be easily overcome.

As has been said in rehousing special consideration has been given to the applications from Service personnel and their claims are arrived at by means of a points system.

Section E Inspection and Supervision of Food

MILK AND DAIRIES.

Number of Tuberculin Tested Producers ...	...	—
Number of Accredited Producers ...	...	4
Number of Pasteurisation Licences ...	...	—
Total number on Register (Cowkeepers and Dairies)		27

Generally it may be said that there have been few complaints as to the keeping qualities of the milk locally but it is known that there is room for improvement in all the means and methods of production. A form of recommendation prepared in association with the County Authority is available and were this to be followed a marked advance not only in production but also in the keeping of animals would be the result.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

This District continues to be served from the central abattoir at Shrewsbury and the meat imported is subject to re-examination by your Officer as required. He reports as follows:—

Table of Meat condemned Locally:—

1 Sheep Carcase ...	...	54 lbs.
8 Fowls, 2 Ducks ...	...	20 lbs.
Total ...		74 lbs.

Table of Other Foods condemned:—

Bacon and Ham ...	...	31 $\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.
Butter ...	...	4 lbs.
Cheese ...	...	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb.
Eggs ...	...	9 $\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.
Flour ...	...	6 lbs.
Oranges ...	...	2387 lbs.
Preserves ...	...	13 lbs.
Other Tinned Goods ...	...	343 lbs.
Total ...		2794 lbs.

FOOD CENTRE.

This is provided and maintained by the County Council and supplies some 2,000 meals daily to school children. These meals are distributed to the various schools by motor vehicle. It is probable that maintenance presents some problems during these difficult times, nevertheless there is room for improvement and such work as interior redecoration of walls and ceiling and the provision of a paved approach to reduce dust from approaching vehicles is needed.

FACTORIES.

There are several factories in the area, two being large factories engaged in constructional engineering work and in the making of sanitary pipe ware. Four are medium sized factories, the rest being small places employing up to about a dozen or so employees.

In the main regulations have been generally observed, but owing to shortage of staff and pressure of other work, it has not been possible to give as much supervision as may be desirable in this direction.

As is common in the area, sanitary accommodation is not of a high standard owing to the lack of adequate sewers, but it is hoped that the provision of new sewage disposal works will bring about some improvement.

In 1947 it is hoped to be able to report more fully on improvements which have taken place.

Section F Prevalence of, and control over, Infectious and Allied Diseases

The following table gives the number of cases of infectious diseases together with the number of deaths from such:—

<i>Disease</i>	<i>Cases notified</i>		<i>Deaths</i>
	1946	1945	
Scarlet Fever	9	17	—
Whooping Cough... ..	57	11	—
Measles	3	50	—
Pneumonia	30	7	—
Dysentery	3	—	—
Erysipelas	—	1	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	1	3	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	2	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—
Cerebro-Spinal Fever ...	—	1	—

INCIDENCE OF DISEASE IN THE VARIOUS AGE GROUPS.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Scarlet Fever</i>		<i>Whooping Cough</i>		<i>Measles</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
0	—	—	2	1	—	—
1	3	2	7	7	—	1
3	1	—	9	14	1	—
5	1	1	8	9	—	1
10	1	—	—	—	—	—
15	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	6	3	26	31	1	2

<i>Years</i>	<i>Pneumonia</i>		<i>Erysipelas</i>		<i>Dysentery</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
0	3	—	—	—	1	—
5	1	4	—	—	—	—
15	7	4	—	—	2	—
45	3	3	—	—	—	—
65	4	1	—	—	—	—
Totals	18	12	—	—	3	—

SCABIES.

It has lately been noticeable that there has been a marked decline in the number of cases of this complaint brought to the notice of the Sanitary Department. So much is this the case that it is anticipated that early in the incoming year it will be possible to dispense with the centre at Newport opened in the early war specially to deal with local cases. When this closure has been made, such infections as come to notice will be dealt with by means of home treatment.

DIPHThERIA IMMUNISATION.

The annual return submitted to the Ministry of Health for the period ending December 31st, 1946, was as follows:—

	<i>Age under 5 years but over 1 year</i>	<i>5 years and over but under 15 years</i>	<i>Total</i>
Children Immunised ...	409	894	1303
Child Population ...	726	1400	2126
Percentage Immunised	56.33%	63.85%	61.29%

The County Authority is responsible for clinical control of this and the system of recording and reporting to the Ministry of Health is conducted locally. Many loopholes in this scheme have been closed and a generally satisfactory means of control is maintained. Locally additional facilities are given to patients to enable them to avail themselves of the services of the local practitioners at no cost to themselves.

TUBERCULOSIS.

The number of notified cases on the Register at December 31st, 1946, and the comparative figures for 1945 and 1944 are as follows:

	<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Pulmonary</i>	<i>Non-Pulmonary</i>	<i>Pulmonary</i>	<i>Non-Pulmonary</i>	
1946	41	36	36	33	146
1945	37	38	39	32	146
1944	34	36	37	35	142

New Cases: Pulmonary 8, Non-pulmonary 3. Total 11.

DEATH RATES

	<i>England & Wales</i>	
Death Rate from Pulmonary Tuberculosis per 100 population	·12	·248
Death Rate from Non Pulmonary Tuberculosis per 1000 population	·37	·080
Total Death Rate (all form)	·49	·328

There was 1 death from Pulmonary and 3 from the Non Pulmonary Form of this disease.

NEW CASES AND MORTALITY, 1946.

Age Group	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-5	1	1	—	1	—	—	1	1
5-15	—	—	1	1	—	—	1	—
15-25	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
25-35	1	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
35-45	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45-55	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55-65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
over 65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Total</i>	5	3	1	2	—	1	2	1

CANCER.

The number of deaths from Cancer in 1946 was 18 (of these 8 were males and 10 were females).

		<i>England Dawley & Wales</i>	
Death Rate per 1,000,000 living	...	2216	1768

10.8.47.

W. A. M. STEWART,
Medical Officer of Health.

